

Calendar No. 337

104TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
104-235 }

TRUCK SAFETY AND CONGRESSIONAL
PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1995

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 981



FEBRUARY 20 (legislative day, FEBRUARY 7), 1996.—Ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

29-010

WASHINGTON : 1996

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

LARRY PRESSLER, South Dakota, *Chairman*

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| TED STEVENS, Alaska | ERNEST F. HOLLINGS, South Carolina |
| JOHN McCain, Arizona | DANIEL K. INOUE, Hawaii |
| CONRAD BURNS, Montana | WENDELL H. FORD, Kentucky |
| SLADE GORTON, Washington | J. JAMES EXON, Nebraska |
| TRENT LOTT, Mississippi | JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV, West Virginia |
| KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, Texas | JOHN F. KERRY, Massachusetts |
| OLYMPIA SNOWE, Maine | JOHN B. BREAUX, Louisiana |
| JOHN ASHCROFT, Missouri | RICHARD H. BRYAN, Nevada |
| BILL FRIST, Tennessee | BYRON L. DORGAN, North Dakota |

PATRIC G. LINK, *Chief of Staff*

KEVIN G. CURTIN, *Democratic Chief Counsel and Staff Director*

Calendar No. 337

104TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
104-235

TRUCK SAFETY AND CONGRESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1995

FEBRUARY 20 (legislative day, FEBRUARY 7), 1996.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. PRESSLER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 981]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 981) the “Truck Safety and Congressional Partnership Act”, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The bill, as reported, would prohibit the regulatory standard for single trailer length, negotiated under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), from exceeding 53 feet.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

Among the issues to be considered as part of the harmonization process under NAFTA are restrictions relating to truck sizes and weights. To that end, Article 913 of NAFTA establishes a land transportation subcommittee charged with developing a program to standardize truck weights, dimensions, and operating procedures.

Many federal highway safety provisions are statutory and would require Congressional approval to alter. For example, Congress specifically enacted a freeze on longer combination vehicle (LCV) standards through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, Public Law 102-240. In contrast to the LCV standards, the 53-foot single trailer standard generally accepted throughout the United States is not maintained as a matter of federal law.

It is presumed Congressional action would be required to implement any change in LCV standards or other statutory provisions

related to highway safety that may be recommended as a result of NAFTA discussions. However, since no federal law exists to statutorily limit the length of trucks, it is possible that a standard could be set by administrative action pursuant to the NAFTA negotiations.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

During the 103d Congress, the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation held a hearing to address issues relating to Truck Lengths and Safety. That hearing, held on September 14, 1994, focused primarily on the issue of LCV's. The issues addressed included (1) the relationship between safety and the length of trailer trucks on the nation's roads; (2) possible effects of the length of these trailers on the infrastructure of the interstate and national highway systems; and (3) the economic value of these commercial vehicles.

During the 104th Congress when the full Senate debated the National Highway System Designation Act, S. 440, Senator Exon expressed concern that NAFTA negotiations could be viewed as a vehicle for parties interested in promoting a longer single trailer standard through unilateral regulatory action. Senator Exon filed an amendment to address these concerns, but agreed not to offer his amendment so members of the Commerce Committee could study fully the implications of the legislative proposal.

Senator Exon introduced S. 981 on June 28, 1995. On July 20, 1995, the Committee met in open executive session to consider S. 981. By voice vote, S. 981 was ordered to be reported without objection.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROVISIONS

The bill as reported proposes any Federal regulatory standard for single trailer length issued pursuant to negotiations and procedures authorized under NAFTA shall not exceed fifty-three feet.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and Section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 26, 1995.

Hon. LARRY PRESSLER,
*Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed S. 981, the Truck Safety and Congressional Partnership Act of 1995, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on July 20, 1995. The bill would prohibit the regulatory standard for single trailer length, negotiated under the North American Free Trade Agreement, from

exceeding 53 feet. Enacting S. 981 would not affect the federal budget or the budgets of state and local governments.

Enacting S. 981 would not affect direct spending or receipts. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply to the bill.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is John Patterson.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. BLUM
(For June E. O'Neill, Director).

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported.

The impact of this legislation is expected to be minimal as the Administration sees little likelihood that NAFTA negotiations will lead to discussions of longer permissible truck lengths. However, S. 920 would assure that if a federal length standard is issued that exceeds 53 feet, Congressional approval would be necessary.

The bill as reported would have no adverse impact on the personal privacy of individuals affected. Paperwork requirements associated with the bill as reported are minimal.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1.—Short title

This section states the short title of the bill, the Truck Safety and Congressional Partnership Act of 1995.

Section 2.—Single trailer length

This section provides that any Federal regulatory standard for single trailer length issued pursuant to negotiations and procedures authorized under NAFTA shall not exceed 53 feet.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee states that the bill as reported would make no change to existing law.